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HURRICANE Hal

McCarthy

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Black volcanic ridges rose between the swathes of golden pasture, and out of the South under the noon sun came a horseman. This was Bill Adams, Cattle Man, returning from a sale of cattle, in the State of Chihuahua. At an Arroyo he fell into an ambush, being captured by five Mexican bandits, who stripped him, and were about to finish him.

A young Texan, Buck Anderson, came surging down upon the scene of the hold-up. His first intention was to tear it in with a brace of guns; but he changed his mind as he came on in full gallop, loosing his rope, and swinging ~~him~~ for the east with a wide loop. He took the whole group, then as the horse braced to the strain, he leapt from the saddle. The knowing horse held the group of bandits, while Buck, with a wide grin on his face, turned loose with a double roll. The bandits made their surrender, and great was the relief and gratitude of Old Adams, of this daring youngster who had saved his life and had done it with the skill of the old times.

This scene dissolves into the interior of the Adams-McFarland ranch house; "So that's how he saved me, and that's why I gave him a job on the ranch, and that's why I say he is the only man to take our money across the border.

McFarland patiently waited for his partner to finish talking - I have no idea of how that money should get over the border. You've given him the job he thinks

"Seems she enjoys him a lot, partner".

At this remark from Adams it started the argument afresh.

Unseen, one of the cow-hands had listened to the conversation.

Outside of the corral, seated on the fence, was McFarland's daughter, Virginia, who watched the Foreman, Jim Lacey, as he missed the rope. She hated him, and so did old man Adams, but he was McFarland's choice. However, neither partner suspected Lacey was stealing their cattle.

Buck Anderson had seen the foreman miss, so vaulting the fence into the corral, he easily roped the out-law and snubbed him to a post. The foreman bade him sharply to mind his own business, but the broad grin, which Buck made, only more enraged Lacey. At that the Foreman saw the cow-hand who was eavesdropping outside the house. He told Lacey what he had overheard, where

the partner to deliver that money by

"Yes, but how are we going to get it there?" asked Adams.

"I suggest," said Lacey "That Mr. McFarland and I make the trip so long as we are not seen leaving, there's not the slightest danger".

McFarland agreed, Adams opposed the suggestion, and they argued again.

Meanwhile, having shown Buck that she cared for him, Virginia started for the house. Buck mounted his horse, and waved goodbye to her as he rode away.

While the partners were still in argument, and Adams was yielding in disgust, Lacey saw, in the mirror that Virginia was coming through the doorway. He had a chance here of getting Virginia to go on the trip. Loosing no time, he suggested that McFarland keep the plan secret from his daughter because she would want to go.

True to his insight, and to the astonishment of both partners, of Virginia's presence, she stepped forward:-

"Is that so, Mr. Lacey? Where ever Dad goes, I go."

Disgusted, Adams left the house, while Virginia coaxed her father to let her go.

Adams rode, and found Buck out on the range.

"My partner", he said, "is leaving with his daughter and Lacey this afternoon to cross the border. They'll take the buckboard and carry a wallet containing a large sum of money. I don't like the scheme. I have suspicions, - Buck, I want you to trail them."

Buck had his own suspicions too, and was glad of the chance to protect the girl he now loved.

At the ranch they prepared the buckboard for the trip. The Foreman had a secret meeting with six riders, whom he instructed to disguise themselves as Mexican Baqueros, and take the trail.

The buckboard, on the way Buck also hit the trail, taking a dangerous route over the mountains from whence he would be able to overlook the route taken by the buckboard, and so keep constant watch without being seen. A false move on that mountain passage would have meant certain death.

From the point where they crossed the boundary, McFarland drove hard, knowing that the country was dangerous. The buckboard was delayed in the sands of Arroyo when the six riders dispatched ahead by Lacey, broke from their ambush. They halted the team; roped the foreman, who was then bound and gagged, and then, under the threat of death, compelled McFarland to lead the horses ahead of them at breakneck speed. Buck witnessed this scene from above, afraid to fire lest he hit Virginia or her father, and to his astonishment he saw the foreman wriggle easily out of his laces and walk over to the horse ready for his use behind some bushes. Lacey mounted and followed the buckboard. Reckless of consequences Buck pushed his horse at high speed down at impossible places. The chase was long and furious, and ended the night before the robbers brought their prisoners to two small cabins, their hang-out. Lacey joined the bandits, and McFarland and Virginia, who had been bound and gagged, were taken to the cabins, while the bandits made head-

Buck had lost the trail, then traversed and found it again some distance in the rear. His horse was done to a turn. He rode up to the cover nearest the cabins, where he left his horse, and scouted the position afoot.

Before parting with the animal he took his rope, which he tucked at the Hondo within his loose gun-belt.

In one of the cabins, Lacey and his bandits were talking. Lacey's intentions was to take Virginia only, traveling further into Mexico. He instructed one of his men to take some food to McFarland and to use that pretext for untieing him. Then he was to leave the door open, and when McFarland attempted to escape, shoot him.

The man carried out Lacey's instructions, and stood outside the cabin window with a rifle in his hands, waiting for the attempted escape. Then came Buck from behind, who knocked the bandit unconscious. Buck decided to attack the cabin which happened to be that occupied by the bandits. While he approached the front door, one of Lacey's men detailed for sentry, left by the back door. Buck drew his guns, kicked the front door opened, and the surprised men raised their hands in surrender. He made them put their guns on the table, and forced Lacey to deliver over the stolen money, which Buck thrust into his own shirt-front.

He was reaching for his rope, when the man who had left by the back door, slipped in the front entrance behind Buck. He pinioned Buck from behind, knocking the guns from his hands.

Using an old wrestling trick, Buck threw the captor over his head launching him into the crowd behind the table. The bandits might as well have attached a lion for the fight was terrific. Buck used up a little furniture for weapons. The only bandit who had consciousness enough covered Buck with a gun, and fired, but not in time to dodge the chair which Buck flung at his head. So Buck got out.

McFarland had released Virginia, and as they came into the open they faced Buck. Hurriedly instructing McFarland to get a horse, Buck hurried Virginia to another horse, secured his own and was just starting away when the bullets began to fly, dangerously close. The bandits had recovered, got to the remaining horses, and before McFarland could get away, they knocked him senseless. They then started in pursuit of Buck and Virginia. There was furious riding all night, and in the dawn Buck held a pass between two high rocks. He instructed Virginia they must part, and he would cover her retreat. He showed her which way to go, then took a chance exposing himself and drawing fire, while Virginia made her escape.

Buck was on the side of the mountain, shooting at him, while he covered her. He was getting clear away when his horse was shot from under him. He scrambled to his feet and ran for it. He came to a road where an excited Mexican farmer with his team was hunting cover, supposing that Mexican Bandits were raiding the countryside. Buck had no trouble in getting the scared Mexican off the wagon. He seized the rig, and drove headlong down a perilous road over hanging a precipice, the wagon was old and Buck took desperate chances.

Lacey seen the escape of Virginia, and took one of the men with him to capture her. The rest of the bandits were close on Buck's wagon when the tongue broke from the front axle, while the wheels were on the abyss. The team kept on, but the wagon rolled on, and Buck jumped at it and went over the edge of the precipice. The bandits pulled up and fired at Buck as he rolled down the steep. Buck knew that the escape was impossible, so he lay on his belly pretending to be dead. The bandits were climbing the mountain when Lacey who had captured Virginia came back and fell on him. Lacey pulled his gun to finish Buck but Virginia pleaded with him. Lacey then that he saw one of his gang had the money, and hoping to trick them, he suddenly turned and ran. Lacey and his horse, keeping them covered the

Buck held his breath, watching out of the corner of his eyes for a chance. The bandits with their hands up, hearing the foreman getting away, turned around, grabbed their weapons, and fired; trying to halt him. They scrambled to their horses, the last one to mount was just starting when Buck, quick as a flash, jumped to his feet, cast with his rope, and threw the horses and rider. He secured the horse for himself, and followed. During the chase Lacey and Virginia were approaching the Mexican railroad near the border. There stood an engine, with tender and flat car beside a working crew engaged in putting out dangerous grass fires along the railroad tracks. When close to the tracks the foreman's horse plunged, shot from under him by the bandits. Lacey got clear, dragged Virginia from her horse, and in desperation forced the crew to uncap the flat-car from the tender, made the frightened girl climb into the cab. Lacey opened the throttle and started away. Buck saw the bandits trying to head off the engine, and realized at once what Lacey had done, and taking a perilous short cut, Buck made for the top of the tunnel which the engine must come through. He dismounted, and slid down the slope over the top of the tunnel. As the engine came through he took the only chance and slid from the edge of the tunnel opening. He dropped into the tender, and was badly hurt, but this did not stop him. He attacked Lacey. They were evenly matched, and in their fight came very near falling between the tender and the engine, and the wheels.

The grass fire had spread to the bridge and it was being consumed in flames. Virginia saw this and screamed. Buck succeeded in knocking out Lacey and getting the money. There was no time to stop the engine, and the burning timbers would not carry its weight. With his arm around Virginia, the only chance left, Buck leaped from the cabin to the river below, where he swam to safety on the bank. When the engine crashed through the burning timbers of the burning bridge, it threw Lacey clear, but he was left unconscious in shallow water close beside the bank.

The Mexican railroad crew had reported to the Rurales who started in pursuit.

It was late that day when old Man Adams worried, and as yet with no news, looked up and saw Buck afoot helping Virginia, both of them exhausted. He ran to them. In the meantime McFarland, covered with dust, and exhausted had secured the aid of a Mexican teamster who drove him home.

Old Adams was beside himself with rage when he heard the story of Buck, who had hardly finished, when two Mexican Rurales, leading a horse, who was lashed by the tail under the horse, and had his wrists shackled behind him, came to the group in the roadway. Adams lost no time in telling the Rurales to deliver the prisoner to Mexican Justice, and as they departed McFarland came up, who for once in his life was compelled to surrender to irate partner.

And Buck and Virginia went on, locked in each others arms, towards the sunset.

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